

Message Text

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12

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 DODE-00 /044 W

----- 048365

R 101110Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY DOHA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1163

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

COMIDEASTFOR

CINCUSNAVEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L DOHA 0026

KUWAIT POUCH BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR QA US OCLR MARR

SUBJ: COMIDEASTFOR VISIT TO QATAR

REF: 75 DOHA 1315, 75 DOHA 1438 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: WITH APPROVAL OF GOQ, ADMIRAL THOMAS J. BIGLEY, COMIDEASTFOR, MADE A BRIEF "PRIVATE" VISIT TO QATAR JAN 7-8. ADMIRAL ESTABLISHED EXCELLENT PERSONAL RAPPORT WITH SHAYKH HAMAD BIN KHALIFA AL THJAI, COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF QATARI ARMED FORCES, AND VISIT APPARENTLY HAS OPENED WAY FOR US NAVY SHIP VISITS TO QATAR. END SUMMARY

2. RADM THOMAS J. BIGLEY, COMIDEASTFOR, VISITED DOHA JAN 7-8. ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR, BIGLEY PAID OFFICE CALL ON SHAYKH HAMAD BIN KHALIFA AL THANI, COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF QATARI ARMED FORCES AND AMIR'S SON, ON JAN 7. LATER SAME DAY, SHAYKH HAMAD JOINED ADMIRAL BIGLEY AND AMBASSADOR FOR PRIVATE LUNCH AT
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RESIDENCE.

3. IN DECEMBER, AT AMBASSADOR'S REQUEST, SHAYKH HAMAD HAD SOUGHT AND RECEIVED AMIR'S APPROVAL FOR ADMIRAL BIGLEY'S VISIT. HAMAD SPECIFIED, HOWEVER, THAT GOQ DESIRED THAT VISIT SHOULD BE REGARDED AS "PRIVATE" AND SHOULD BE IN LOW KEY. AMBASSADOR ADVISED HAMAD AT THAT TIME THAT WE WOULD AGAIN TAKE UP SUBJECT OF US NAVY SHIP VISITS TO DOHA DURING ADMIRAL BIGLEY'S PRESENCE. HAMAD REITERATED "POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES" WHICH SHIP VISIT COULD CAUSE GOQ, BUT WE SAID SUBJECT WOULD BE RAISED NONETHELESS (REFTELS).

4. DURING JAN 7 CALL, ADMIRAL EXPLAINED IN DETAIL MIDEASTFOR MISSION TO SHAYKH HAMAD, OUTLINED SCHEDULED PORT CALLS OF MIDEASTFOR SHIPS IN AREA AND MENTIONED OJT TRAINING PROVIDED SAUDIS, KUWAITIS AND OTHERS ABOARD US SHIPS. HE EMPHASIZED MIDEASTFOR'S CORDIAL RELATIONS WITH ALL REGIONAL STATES, INCLUDING IRAN, AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT MIDEASTFOR COULD RESUME VISITS TO DOHA IN NEAR FUTURE.

5. HAMAD REPEATED USUAL REFRAIN THAT GOQ COULD ENCOUNTER "POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES" WITH OTHER ARABS BECAUSE OF SHIP VISITS TO DOHA. HOWEVER, HE ACKNOWLEDGED POINTS THAT MIDEASTFOR VESSELS VISITING OTHER AREA PORTS ON REGULAR BASIS WITHOUT DIFFICULTY AND THAT BRITISH, FRENCH, INDIAN AND EVE IRAQIS HAD BEEN PERMITTED TO MAKE PORT CALLS HERE DURING PAST YEAR. HAMAD THEN INDICATED GOQ WOULD FAVORABLY RECEIVE REQUEST FOR SHIP VISIT. WE ASSURED HAMAD THAT FORMAL REQUEST WOULD BE MADE IN NEAR FUTURE.

6. COMMENT: ADDRESSEES WILL RECALL THAT GOQ DECLINED APPROVAL OF SHIP VISIT ABOUT A YEAR AGO BECAUSE OF ALLEGED US THREATS TO INVADE GULF OIL PRODUCING COUNTRIES AT THAT TIME. WE ARE APPARENTLY BY THAT ONE, AND CAN REASONABLY ASSUME THAT AMIR IS FAVORABLY DISPOSED IN PRINCIPLE TO SHIP VISIT SINCE HAMAD HIMSELF CANNOT BLOW HIS NOSE WITHOUT AMIR'S PERMISSION. FINAL PROOF, HOWEVER, OF GOQ'S CHANGE OF HEART WILL COME ONLY WHEN WE PRESENT FORMAL REQUEST, BUT WE ARE OPTIMISTIC. ADMIRAL BIGLEY ESTABLISHED EXCELLENT PERSONAL RAPPORT WITH SHAYKH HAMAD, AND HIS VISIT WAS TIMELY AND USEFUL CATALYST IN SOLVING OF PROBLEM OF US NAVY SHIP VISITS TO QATAR.
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